

variations that looked tricky in high heels; boys improvised freer, broader figures similar to those of the jitterbug, and many steps were introduced, such as triple stamps in the middle of Seljančica, individual turns and claps in Zaplet, and complex scissor variations in Žikino.

American-born tamburitza players became interested in other types of music found among the nationality groups in the U. S. For example, tamburitza orchestras in America have a great love for Russian and Ukrainian music, because it is adaptable to the tamburitza instrument. "Tamburaši" may strike up "Hopak" during an intermission, someone makes up a kolo with crouches to go with the music, calls it "Kozačko Kolo", and a new dance is on its way to becoming a standard favorite among the Serb and Croatian settlements throughout the country. American Yugoslavs have taken the Mexican "La Raspa" and created "King Kolo", and recently they borrowed the Greek Syrto "Samiotissa", dubbed it "Makedonka", and even composed Serbian lyrics to go with it.

Dance leaders have appeared among the Croatian and Serbian colonies, and are trying hard to spread kolo among their own people. These leaders, often with great imagination, head kolo clubs in various cities, but unfortunately there is a lack of uniformity in the way they teach, so that Chicago kolo dancers are often unable to dance with those in Pittsburgh, who in turn differ from those further east, etc. A "Kolo Federation" has been organized in the East, but a feeling of competition has developed within it, prompting leaders to compose new kolos, to add many figures to originally simple dances, and to attempt in other ways to outdo each other. Besides creating a confused situation for folk dancers who go to the "halls" to dance kolo authentically with the people, this sad element of competition has also greatly jeopardized the success of what began as a healthy movement toward the preservation of Yugoslav dance in America.

There are very bright spots in the kolo picture, however, which off-set some of the negative elements. First, there are a number of Croatian and Serbian colonies in the U.S. where the dances have been remarkably well preserved, notably New York and several smaller settlements in Pennsylvania. Secondly, the Duquesne University Tamburitians, a Yugoslav music and dance group located in Pittsburgh, have made several trips to Yugoslavia itself to collect dances and music hitherto unknown in America, material which is being presented in concerts to the American public. Thirdly, the recent popularity of kolos among non-Yugoslav folk dancers has stirred up a great deal of interest in kolo background, to the extent where there are probably more non-Yugoslavs now dancing kolos than Yugoslavs themselves!

THE TAMBURITZANS

John Filcich

In the city of Pittsburgh, on the campus of the Duquesne University is a small building which might well be called the mecca of Yugoslav folk-arts in America. It is the headquarters of the internationally known "Tamburitians"—a very unique collegiate organization formed some twenty years ago to preserve the folk culture of the South Slavs in America. This they have done primarily through the tamburitza, the stringed musical instrument synonymous with kolo and other Yugoslav folk music.

It all started as early as 1932 and its early history is also a chapter in the life story of its founder and builder, Matt L. Gouze. It started as a tamburitza orchestra on the campus of St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota, moved with Gouze to Austin, Texas, and in 1938 took roots at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, the city with the



largest concentration of South Slavs in America.

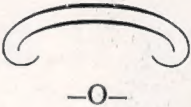
The Tammies, as the group is familiarly known, is composed of about 25 students all of whom are in attendance at Duquesne. They are actually attending college on a scholarship basis, sponsored by the Tamburitza Scholarship Fund. The purpose of the Fund, says Walter W. Kolar, present director of the Tamburitians, is two-fold. First it provides a college education to worthy high school graduates who otherwise might not have the opportunity and at the same time enables them to learn to play in the tamburitza orchestra, learn the kolos and other dances, and travel quite extensively on tours. Secondly, this helps preserve the South Slav folk music, songs, and dances, introduces the tamburitza as a musical instrument, and enriches American culture.

About a dozen states and Canada have contributed members to the Tamburitians and while most of them have been of Yugoslav parentage, hardly a school year has gone by without members of other Slavic and many non-Slavic ancestries. The Tammies must maintain high scholastic grades (some are even on the Dean's list) and still devote many evenings to practicing their instruments and drilling through the dance routines and many week-ends performing in near-by cities. Their school vacations are taken by tours to various parts of the country, and their summer vacation is cut short as they must learn a new show before the school year starts at their summer camp in Wisconsin.

Under the directorship of Gouze the group became a very versatile, top-notch entertaining troupe with some 100 performances to 100,000 people each year. Television performances on national shows, radio broadcasts, and appearances on the stages of such places as Chicago's Civic Auditorium or Carnegie Music Hall in New York are routine for the Tammies. In 1945 they were in California, where people are still talking about their performances. Their best numbers have been recorded commercially by several record companies.

Gouze realized his dream of international popularity when the entire cast was asked to tour Yugoslavia in 1949. There they performed in all the major cities to crowds as high as 20,000 and proved that the folk music, songs, and dances which the original immigrants brought to America decades ago was still part of the life of their descendants. The trip was so successful in every respect that it was repeated in 1952. It was at this time that Dick Crum, their valuable dance choreographer and director, was asked to join the group and gather folk material on the trip suitable for future presentation in America. Dick's interest, research, and work has brought the dancing of the Tammies up to the high par the music and choral section had enjoyed. Folk dances such as never before were seen outside of Yugoslavia executed in authentic style and costumes—even up to the "opanki"—and native music including shepherd's flutes were the highlights of the last season. And now,

with the credit and experience of another season's research alone in Yugoslavia just completed, the Tamburitians, under Dick Crum's direction, should become America's foremost dancing group and maintain their claim as "America's most colorful collegiate musical organization".



LITH "HRVATS" IN 38



The above picture is of Vyts Beliajus and Wenetta Grybas Childs, formerly of Chicago and now both are in California. I became fascinated by Jugolsav dances during the mid "30"ies. After 1937 I instructed Croatian Kolos at Chicago's Howell House, a settlement house on Racine near 18th St., in the heart of a Croatian and Czech Settlement. I also had a Czech group, where the Beseda and Czech couples dances were taught. We organized a small Kolo group, probably the first in the United States, whose purpose was to demonstrate the Yugoslav dances, mostly done at presentations connected with the Howell House. Wenetta and I also did Croatian interpretations at several public concerts. The above picture is from such a recital in 1938. I have been instrumental in introducing Kolos for the first time to many non-Yugoslav groups throughout the country, from coast to coast and from border to border.. My Lithuanian group, LYS (Lithuanian Youth Society) even danced a group of Kolos at a National Folk Festival (about 1939 or 1940) to the playing of the presently famous Duquesne University Tamburitians when that year they didn't bring a kolo group with them.

CHICAGO VISIT OF DUQUESNE TAMBURITZANS

The famous Tamburitians of Duquesne University under the direction of Walter W. Kolar, performed to a packed auditorium at the American Hall in Chicago. The program of orchestral and dance numbers was superb. Even the most professional entertainers could have appreciated the split second timing wherein a tamburitza player, unnoticed to the audience, slipped out to don a costume and reappear in a folk dance number. Most of the musicians also danced at one time or another.

The program was not limited to dances of Yugoslavia, but included selections from other European countries. All of the dances, except perhaps for the Hungarian were of a very high caliber.

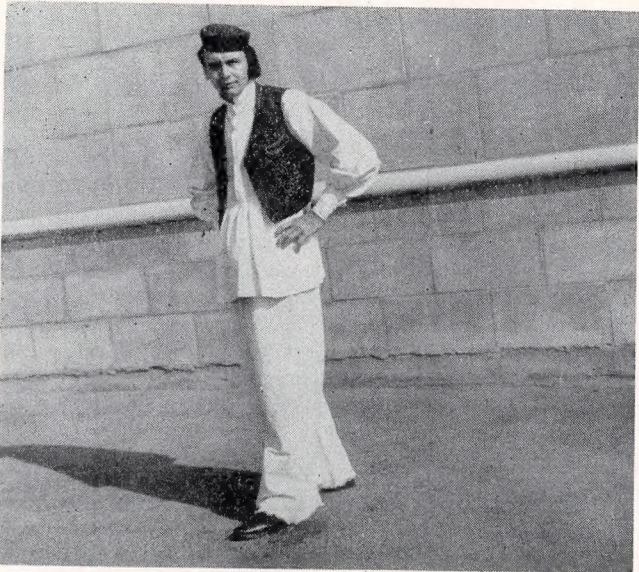
There were nine tamburitians in all, ranging from the bass tamburitza comparable to a bass fiddle, to a miniature slightly smaller than a mandolin.

The most popular and most superbly executed dances were their kolos. These were taught to the group by Richard Crum who has studied them in Yugoslavia. Dick was not with the group on their tour this year since he was at that time in Europe (Yugoslavia) collecting more material.

The purpose of the Tamburitians is two-fold. Besides providing a unique type of entertainment and experience to a select group of students from Duquesne University, they use the money earned on the tours for scholarships to continue their studies. Some of the students will continue in the field of music after they leave the university, however, their occupational aspirations are varied.

John Mitchell

A WORD FROM TONY BAZDARICH



Tony Bazdarich in a Karlovac (near Zagreb) costume. Tony is active in kolo circles and is the leader at St. Anthony's Croatian Church.

Dear Vyts:

When you asked me to contribute to your Yugoslav issue, I was honored but reason set in and, as water seeks its level, I realized that I could hardly write authoritatively. But I will put down a few observations as an ethnic straddling the fence into the domain of the "folk dancer".

First, about costumes. Most of the costumes being worn in California are being taken from the Zagreb area, and more particularly from the Sestine community. It so happens that I have a genuine costume from this area made about twenty-five years ago. It is one of the few village that uses the high boots, but my brother-in-law who lived